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Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 126724
ORIGIN EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 /013 R

66011
DRAFTED BY EUR/WE:KSMITH:CM
APPROVED BY EUR/WE:KSMITH
----------021102 181959Z /40
O 181939Z MAY 78
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
INFO AMEMBASSY LISBON IMMEDIATE 0379

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 126724

FOL RPT SANTO DOMINGO 2651 ACTION SECSTATE INFO CARACAS
LONDON PANAMA PORT AU PRINCE USCINCSO QUARRY HGHTS CZ 18 MAY
78 QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTO DOMINGO 2651

LONDON FOR ARA DAS BUSHNELL

PANAMA FOR ROBERT PASTOR, NSC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, DR
SUBJECT: SITREP AS OF 2:00 A.M. THURSDAY, MAY 18

1. ASSESSING ALL EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO EMBASSY SINCE MILITARY
MOVED IN AND SHUT DOWN JCE AT 4 A.M. YESTERDAY MORNING, WE
CANNOT CONCLUDE OTHERWISE THAN THAT PRESIDENT BALAGUER AND DOMINICAN
MILITARY HAVE DECIDED TO VOUCHSAFE HIS "REELECTION" ON ANY
PRETEXT OPEN TO THEM, PLAUSIBLE OR NOT.

2. WE ALSO DETECT SIGNS WITHIN GOVERNMENT POWER CENTERS OF
INDECISION AND PERHAPS DISARRAY, AS IF THEIR ACTIONS HAD NOT
BEEN THOUGHT THROUGH. THE UNCERTAINTIES MANIFEST IN THE LACK
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OF CLEAR DECISION-MAKING BY BALAGUER HIMSELF SINCE INTERRUPTION
OF THE ELCTORAL PROCESS SUGGEST HE AND HIS ASSOCIATES FIND
THEMSELVES IN A BLIND ALLEY.

3. IN OUR VIEW, THE ONLY COURSE THEY NOW SEE OPEN TO THEM
APPEARS TO BE TO BRAZEN THE THING OUT AND HOPE THAT WHATEVER COMES
AFTER WILL EVENTUALLY GO AWAY. THERE ARE THESE INDICATORS:

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A. THE SILENCE OF THE GOVERNMENT ON WHAT IS ACTUALLY AHPPENING-
EXCEPT FOR ARMED FORCES' DENIAL OF COUP D'ETAT, AND THEN ONLY
AFTER ANXIOUS RUMORS IN ALL PARTS OF THE COUNTRY REACHED ALARMING
LEVELS, JCE "ANNOUNCEMENT" VOTE-COUNT WAS BEING RESUMED, BALAGUER'S
IMPROBABLE EXPLANATIONS FOR PRESENT STATE OF AFFAIRS TO OAS
OBSERVERS, AND FINALLY, HIS DISINGENUOUS REPLY TO MESSAGE FROM
SECRETARY VANCE.

B. THE UNPLUGGING OF OUR CONTACTS WITH THE REFORMISTA PARTY,
GOVERNMENT AND MILITARY CONTACTS. AS WITH THE EVASIVENESS OF THE
PRESIDENT'S ADVISERS WHEN AMBASSADOR YOST URGENTLY SOUGHT TO MEET
WITH BALAGUER, PRACTICALLY ALL EMBASSY LINES TO GOVERNMENT
WENT DOWN AFTER THE JCE INTERVENTION. ONLY A FEW OLD FRIENDS WILL
CONFIDE MOST PRIVATELY THAT THEFT OF THE ELECTION CONTINUES
AFOOT AND; THEY ARE SADDENED BY THIS DEVELOPMENT; OTHERS BEGAN
PARROTING WHAT SEEMS TO BE THE GOVERNMENT'S DEVELOPING LINE TO
EXPLAIN RECENT EVENTS: THAT THE INTERVENTION WAS TRIGGERED BY
FRAUDULENT TACTICS OF THE PRD, PERHAPS IN CAHOOTS WITH THE JCE.

C. THE BACK AND FORTH OVER THE ANNOUNCEMENT AT 8:30 WEDNESDAY
EVENING THAT THE VOTE-COUNT WAS RESUMING. SHORTLY AROUND 7
O'CLOCK WE HAD BEEN INFORMED BY PUBLIC RELATIONS MAN OF ARMED
FORCES SECRETARIAT THAT NONE OTHER THAN NATIONAL JCE PRESIDENT
CASTILLO WOULD GO ON TELEVISION AT 8 P.M. TO EXPLAIN EVERYTHING
AND TO REASSURE THE PEOPLE THE ELECTIONS WOULD BE CLEAN, FAIR,
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ETC. INSTEAD, AFTER MUCH CONFUSION ON THE PUBLIC AIRWAVES, THE
JCE "ANNOUNCEMENT" WAS READ BY AN UNIDENTIFIED "SPOKESMAN."
CASTILLO HAS DROPPED FROM SIGHT, PRESUMABLY STAYING OUT OF HARM'S
WAY; THE FAMILY OF HIS COLLEAGUE IN SANTIAGO REPORTS THE LATTER
DETAINED AND RELEASED AND IS NOW REPORTED TO BE IN HIDING.

4. FROM STRONG REPRESENTATIONS WE HAVE CONVEYED SINCE THE
INTERVENTION IN THE VOTING AND OUR NEAR-WARNINGS PRIOR TO THAT
ACT, IT IS CLEAR BALAGUER AND HIS ASSOCIATES KNOW EXACTLY WHAT
WE WISH TO PRESS UPON THEM. SECRETARY VANCE'S MESSAGE WILL HAVE
LEFT NO ONE IN THE GODR IN DOUBT AS TO OUR DEEP CONCERN OVER
TURN IN EVENTS.

5. PERHAPS TOMORROW, WHEN THE GOVERNMENT WILL FIND ATTITUDES
FURTHER HARDENED AGAINST IT, IT WILL TAKE PAUSE TO RECONSIDER
THE DANGEROUS COURSE ON WHICH IT HAS EMBARKED. TONIGHT, WE SEE
NO DISPOSITION OF THIS HAPPENING. IN THE MEANTIME PRESSURE
FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY (AS PRESIDENT PEREZ CLEARLY SEES -
CARACAS 4531) WILL COTNINUE TO BE IMPORTANT TO CONTAINING THE
SITUATION.
YOST

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: SITREP, POLITICAL MILITARY RELATIONS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 18 may 1978
Decaption Date: 01 jan 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978STATE126724
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: KSMITH:CM
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780210-0132
Format: TEL
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780543/aaaabkri.tel
Line Count: 117
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 1eb8309b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ORIGIN EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 01 jun 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 2648242
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SITREP AS OF 2:00 A.M. THURSDAY, MAY 18
TAGS: PINT, PEPR, PGOV, DR
To: LISBON
Type: TE
vdkvgwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/1eb8309b-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
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